

# A Report to the 46<sup>th</sup> District

## **Representative Phyllis Gutiérrez Kenney**

46th Legislative District

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Community & Economic  
Development & Trade – *Chair*

Appropriations

Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Education

Joint Legislative Economic  
Development & Trade Committee

*Representative*

**Phyllis  
Gutiérrez  
Kenney**



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Dear Neighbors:

The 2007 session of the State Legislature was one of the most productive sessions in my ten years in the House of Representatives. We left Olympia with a tremendous sense of pride and accomplishment. We delivered on promises made in health care, public safety, education, economic development and the environment, and in the process addressed many concerns in the 46th District.

I was successful in my sponsorship of the bill creating Opportunity Grants which will provide funding for college tuition, fees and supplies for low-income students pursuing training in high demand fields like aerospace and health care.

Here are some of the many ways we pushed forward on the Democratic agenda:

- Health care coverage will be extended to 38,000 more children in low-income families and a true children's mental health system is being created in Washington state.
- We're making health care more affordable for thousands of adults by creating the Washington Health Insurance Partnership.
- Our entire education system, from early childhood learning to opportunities for higher education, is benefiting from better funding, new programs, smaller class sizes, rewards for outstanding teachers and help for struggling students.
- We took steps to ensure that the 46th District and other areas of the state will share in the economic prosperity that has given Washington record low unemployment rates and in the future will have skilled workers who qualify for family-wage jobs.
- Our commitment to clean air and water is being met with a directive that public agencies use 100% biofuels by 2015 and more than \$250 million in funding to help improve the quality and quantity of water in our state.

As chair of the House Community and Economic Development and Trade Committee, I helped shepherd through a measure creating Innovation Partnership Zones to strengthen the connections between research and business, and a bill providing more loan money for minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

From my seat on the House Appropriations Committee I helped shape the biennium budget that includes \$5.4 million in capital projects and \$30.3 million in transportation projects for the 46th District in 2007-09.

Read on for more details on the important work of the 2007 Legislature and let me hear from you during the interim as we prepare for 2008. I welcome your phone calls, e-mails and letters.

Representative Phyllis Gutiérrez Kenney  
46th Legislative District

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# Representative Phyllis Gutiérrez Kenney

### Health care accomplishments

The state, using federal matching funds, will extend health care to 38,000 more children in families with income up to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (\$51,625 for a family of 4). Effective Jan. 1, 2009, it will be extended even further to children in families at 300% of the FPL.

For the 520,000 adults in our state who can't afford health insurance, and the hundreds of small employers increasingly strapped to provide it, some relief came in the form of:

- The three-way Washington Health Insurance Partnership that will allow employers to decide how much they want to contribute to the cost of their employees' coverage, allow employees a choice of plans and let them use pre-tax dollars to pay their share of the premium and provide state help to low-income employees struggling to pay their share of the premium.
- Extended health care coverage for former foster children over the age of 18.
- Approval of recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care to strengthen our public health system and cut red tape by encouraging more electronic record-keeping in medical care.

### Colorectal cancer screening

A personal triumph in health care legislation came with the governor's signature on House Bill 1337, which I sponsored to reduce the number of people who are killed by colorectal cancer every year in our state.

Beginning this July, health insurance plans must cover colorectal cancer screening exams and laboratory tests consistent with recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These benefits will be provided to individuals at least 50 years old and to those who are under 50 if they are at high risk for colorectal cancer.

Early detection and treatment will help us strike back at this disease which claims 1,000 lives a year in Washington state.

### Wise investments in education



So that our workers of the future can stake a claim in the evolving global marketplace, we passed legislation in the House to ensure that the classrooms of today are not overly crowded, staffed with outstanding teachers and preparing our students to learn skills that will get them family-wage jobs.

Some of our investments in education took the form of:

- Funding to phase in all-day kindergarten in high-poverty schools.



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- Providing another \$60 million in additional resources to school districts with high numbers of special education students.
- Allocating an additional \$350 million for teacher salaries, rewarding outstanding teachers with bonuses and recruiting multilingual students to become teachers.
- Giving voters the opportunity to decide if their local school levies should be decided by a simple majority instead of the current 60%. (The election will be this fall.)
- Funding 9,700 more slots in our universities and college colleges.
- Providing scholarships to high-achieving low- and middle-income students pursuing a degree in math, science or related field.
- Qualifying more students for State Need Grants by allowing those enrolled for less than half time to apply.
- Tuition waivers for families of fallen veterans and National Guard members.

## Expanding Opportunity Grants

For students and their future employers, I was pleased with the passage of my bill expanding the Opportunity Grants program. These grants will help low-income students gain job skills that are in high demand.



*Rep. Gutiérrez Kenney, Governor Gregoire and Speaker Chopp at the Opportunity Grants Bill Signing Ceremony*

With the average cost of community and technical college attendance in our state rising to \$12,900 a year, Opportunity Grants are targeting students from households with incomes almost \$2,000 less than that average.

Business, industry and workforce councils will identify those fields that are in high demand such as nursing, welding and drafting and students studying those fields can obtain grants to cover not only tuition but books, fees and supplies.

Employers will benefit too as they are connected with workers with mid-level skills who can step into some of the 30,000 jobs annually that are now taking months to fill.

## More employers, more jobs

We worked on ways to add to the 62,000 new jobs created this past year in Washington and finding ways to sup-

port employers, and these are some of the results:

- Transportation and Capital budgets for 2007-09 are expected to support a total of 43,000 jobs through 2010.
- 21 million in the Capital Budget will fund several projects to assist economically-distressed communities in rural and urban Washington. These investments expand economic development and job opportunities, and help revitalize business and residential districts.
- More options for worker retraining with a vocational rehabilitation pilot program.
- Partnerships with industry to connect students through skill centers and technical training to career programs.



- More marketing of tourism and creation of a competitive local grant program to help pay for local tourism promotions.
- Reduction of unemployment insurance rates for start-up businesses.
- Increasing the amount for the linked deposit loan program from \$100 million to \$150 million to give women- and minority-owned businesses more access to capital.

## Protecting vulnerable adults and children

As lawmakers, we take our responsibility to protect vulnerable adults and children very seriously. In this regard, some of the legislation we approved in Olympia includes:

- The extension of Medicaid coverage for youths who have been in foster care, from their 18th to 21st birthdays.
- The creation of the Individual and Family Services Program to provide families with support to care for their developmentally disabled sons and daughters in their home.
- The improvement of our child welfare system with new laws that identify and reduce risks of child abuse.
- The establishment of a 15-member workgroup to evaluate and make recommendations for the training of long-term care providers who work in adult family homes and residential facilities for the developmentally disabled.



## 46th District Capital Budget projects

Statewide, the 2007-09 Capital Budget includes a record level \$880 million for K-12 construction and \$1.06 billion for higher education. In the 46th District, \$5.4 million from the Capital budget will fund these projects:

- \$7,500 in renovations for the 826 Seattle project under the Building for the Arts program.
- \$350,000 for North Helpline Lake City Court.
- \$1.5 million for the Nordic Heritage Museum
- Four different allocations for North Seattle Community College:  
Employment Resource Center (\$1.9 million); Facility preservation (\$358,875);  
Minor Works Program (\$767,600); Minor Works Preservation (\$486,500).